(c) The knowledge base of the various R&D facilities already existing in the Government and the public sector oil companies are being networked with state of the art R&D Centres around the world. In this regard, MOUs have been signed between these institutes and institutions in Russia, Romania, Canada, Norway & the Republic of Korea, and talks are underway for finalization of such MOUs with institutions in United Kingdom, United States of America, China and Japan. Besides, Government to Government MOUs in this regard have been concluded with Turkey, Romania, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea and Venezuela.

(d) The Ministry has undertaken various measures to collaborate with the private sector through the industry organization of Petrofed. A brain storming session on R&D was held on 2.3.2005 at which representatives of the private and public sector oil companies, research institutions and academia identified selected topics of immediate relevance to the upstream hydrocarbons industry. As an outcome of this session, four working groups have been formed to suggest measures to upgrade the technical know-how and skill in the petroleum industry. These groups comprise representatives of both private and public sector oil companies. Efforts are underway to continue this dialogue further with the involvement of the entire petroleum industry.

Bifurcation of MRPL from ONGC

†1478. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) by when Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. (MRPL) was bifurcated from Hindustan Petroleum and the reasons therefor;

(b) by when MRPL was handed over to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and the loss of MRPL at that time;

(c) whether it is a fact that preparations are being made to hand over MRPL once again to Hindustan Petroleum by bifurcating it from ONGC as MRPL attain the position of a profit making one; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) In view of difficult financial position of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL), A.V. Birla Group (ABG) had proposed to quit the company in favour of a financially sound investor who had the capability to inject required capital for the turn-around of MRPL. Accordingly, in March, 2003, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) acquired the entire shareholding of ABG in MRPL for Rs. 59.43 crore and also infused Rs. 600 crore during that month as part of the approved Debt Restructuring Package. With this, HPCL's equity shareholding in MRPL came down from 37.39% of 16.95%.

(b) ONGC took management control of MRPL on 30.3.2003. As on 31.3.2003, the accumulated losses of MRPL amounted to Rs. 1,184.50 crore.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Non-availability of tanker ships for LPG

1479. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the LPG crisis in Delhi in September, 2005 triggered by strike in LPG bottling plants in Delhi area, has ended by now;

(b) whether the refineries including Reliance have resumed production of LPG; and

(c) whether a new threat has emerged with the non-availability of tanker ships for carrying LPG from overseas?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) LPG requirements are met by a combination of domestic production and imports. A temporary shortage of LPG emerged in September, 2005 on account of various factors. PSU production in the period April—September, 2005 was 303 TMT (Thousand Metric Tonne) less than planned; Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) production was 190 TMT less than planned. In consequence, physical inventories with oil marketing companies (OMCs) declined from 333 TMT at the beginning of April, 2005 to 190 TMT at the beginning of October, 2005.